

Sculpture Of Jacob Epstein



Sculpture of Jacob Epstein

The Eisenberg-Robbins Collection

December 15, 1973-
January 27, 1974

The Corcoran Gallery of Art
Washington, D.C.

Library of Congress Number 73-92674

Design: Terry Dale
Photography: Bernard Williams
Printing: Virginia Lithograph
photo at right by Eliot Elisfon



**The Board of Trustees
of The Corcoran Gallery of Art
1973**

Mrs. Philip Amram
James Biddle
Frederick M. Bradley
Mrs. J. Carter Brown
Robert B. Eichholz
David E. Finley
Lee M. Folger
Charles C. Glover, Jr., Emeritus
Gordon Gray, Emeritus
John H. Hall, Jr.
George E. Hamilton, Jr., President
Hugh N. Jacobsen
Freeborn G. Jewett
Mrs. Graeme Korff
David Lloyd Kreeger
Mrs. John A. Logan
Mrs. Walter S. Salant
B. Francis Saul II
Adolph Slaughter
Corcoran Thom, Jr.
Mrs. Wynant Vanderpool, Jr.
Mrs. Brainard H. Warner III
J. Burke Wilkinson
Stanley Woodward
Niles W. Bond, Secretary
Robert L. Walsh, Jr., Treasurer

With great delight the Corcoran Gallery of Art presents a group of bronzes by the sculptor Sir Jacob Epstein, the Eisenberg-Robbins Collection. As Director, I am particularly pleased with the opportunity to present the work of the British sculptor. Jacob Epstein was born in 1880 and died in 1959. During his lifetime he made a major and influential contribution to art in Britain. His sculpture was often controversial as his vision was ahead of his time. Epstein executed many major pieces for public buildings, among which is the *Christ in Majesty* in Llandaff Cathedral in my home town, Cardiff. For many years this piece has been a great inspiration to me and to others, dominating as it does the ancient nave of this famous cathedral.

Throughout his life Epstein sculpted a number of uniquely personal portrait busts, combining his forceful use of material and energetic expression of form with the character of the sitter. Among the busts in the exhibition is one of Jacob Kramer, an artist who worked in Leeds. In fact, the building in which I once taught at Leeds is now called the Jacob Kramer College. So the show has various personal associations for me and I hope many will share my delight in the sculptures.

The Corcoran Gallery of Art wishes to thank Mr. Emil Eisenberg of Worcester, Massachusetts, and Mr. Norman B. Robbins of Worcester and Miami Beach, Florida, for the loan of this collection of 35 bronzes. The Gallery is further indebted to Warren Robbins, Director of the Museum of African Art, for arranging the loan and for assisting in the planning and preparation of the exhibition and catalogue. Research for the catalogue was carried out by Stephanie Belt, with the essay written by Ms. Belt and Karen Cook, associates of the Museum of African Art. As always, I want to thank Corcoran staff members for their support and aid, especially Frances Fralin, my Curatorial Assistant and Curatorial Office Assistant Mary Ann Igna for their help in the catalogue production.

The Corcoran is fortunate indeed to have such an outstanding group of bronzes to present to the Washington public.

Roy Slade, Director

INTRODUCTION

The work of Jacob Epstein poses definite problems for the connoisseur. One is the question of modernism: considering what his contemporaries Matisse, Picasso and Brancusi were doing in the first decades of this century, Epstein's work appears anachronistic at first glance. The artist's best-known works, the monumental public sculptures, may strike a contemporary sensibility as bloated and pretentious. Works like *Ecce Homo* and the *Liverpool Giant* seem at best fitting ornaments for the inflated architectural style which Jacques Barzun labelled Philistine Solid. Epstein's sculpture ingratiate itself even less than Rodin's; it is an *oeuvre* which one must force oneself to explore. Yet if one can overcome this initial resistance, Epstein's work offers great satisfactions—and surprises.

Style, for Epstein, was largely a response to the challenge at hand. His public commissions were frequently carved, while his smaller works were almost invariably modelled, and he often jumped from one mode to another within a given period. This willful manipulation of style links him to Picasso, and separates him from Matisse, whose own art evolved within an almost Aristotelian precision. Like Picasso, whose stylistic departures always scandalized an intolerant public, Epstein found violent controversy in the wake of every unveiling of his public commissions and monumental sculptures, beginning in 1908 with the eighteen heroic-sized figures executed for the British Medical Association building on the Strand in London. Conservative critics and certain segments of the public were offended by the nudity of allegorical figures like the Strand statues, as well as the non-Anglo-Saxon features of religious figures like the *Risen Christ* of 1919. By contrast, Epstein as portraitist consistently won public admiration and critical acclaim, and it is this segment of his *oeuvre* which is reflected in the present exhibition of the Robbins-Eisenberg Collection.

In 1913 Epstein aligned himself briefly with the English Vortex movement. During this year he produced several of

his most abstract works, including the powerful, menacing *Rock Drill* and two marble *Venuses*, certain features of which suggest African sculpture. Epstein has written that the geometric simplicity of many of his later carved works can be traced to his early experiments with abstraction:

*The discipline of simplification of forms, unity of design, and co-ordination of the masses is all to the good; and I think that this discipline has influenced me in my later works like the "Behold the Man" and the "Adam." But to think of abstraction as an end in itself is undoubtedly letting oneself be led into a cul-de-sac, and can only lead to exhaustion and impotence.*¹

As a modeller, however, Epstein remained committed throughout his career to naturalistic depiction of the human figure. This humanist bias led him to devote a major portion of his time to non-commissioned portraits of family members or favorite models. These he undertook partly for the challenges inherent in modelling or structuring a particular face and head. His autobiographical writings reveal his commitment to this aspect of his work: "Personally I place my portrait work in as important a category as I place any other work of mine, and I am content to be judged by it."²

Epstein's earliest artistic activity grew out of his absorption with the teeming street life in the Jewish ghetto where he was born on Manhattan's lower East Side. From the window of his Hester Street lodgings he sketched vivid faces and vignettes. His early training consisted of two terms of drawing and painting in life classes at the Art Students' League. When he decided to study sculpture, Epstein entered a bronze-casting foundry and attended a modelling class supervised by George Grey Barnard. In 1901 Epstein was asked to illustrate Hutchins Hapgood's now-classic book, *The Spirit of the Ghetto*. With the proceeds from these drawings he sailed for France the following year to study first at the *École des Beaux Arts* and then at the *Académie Julian*. During a London sojourn he

made an ecstatic discovery of the Elgin marbles at the British Museum, and, increasingly dissatisfied with his studies in Paris, he decided to move to London in 1905.³

The present exhibition includes works ranging from the formative period of 1908, shortly after completion of the Strand statues, to 1951, a year before Epstein's first major retrospective exhibition at the Tate. *The English Girl* (1909; cat. no. 2) and *Euphemia Lamb* (1908; cat. no. 1) reflect Epstein's early attempts to eliminate extraneous detail and distill his images to an almost classical simplicity. *Euphemia Lamb* is numbered among the finest of these early works. The portrait combines a breadth and monumentality of form reminiscent of Masaccio with the uncanny animation and intimacy of Donatello's famed bust of John the Baptist; yet the cast-down eyes and slight tilt of the head suggest a charming reticence. For all its economy of form, the dazzling control of nuance in its surface modelling clearly identifies its creator as a master.

The use of broad, simple planes gives way to broken, electric surfaces in the work of the next four decades. The head of *Augustus John* (1916; cat. no. 4) provides an early example of the sculptor's audacious surface treatment which he felt "breaks up the light, and accentuates the characteristics," giving "both character and likeness to the face."⁴ Epstein also believed it "necessary to accentuate some particular trait that gives the character to the face and distinguishes it from the other faces."⁵ In the portrait of John, the crackling surface treatment echoes the salient hair and beard, creating "a certain wildness, an untamed quality,"⁶ which Epstein considered the "essence" of the painter, one of his earliest friends in England.

Further exploration of the expressive possibilities of surface appears in later portraits of the twenties and thirties, such as the *Self Portrait with a Beard* (1920), *Jacob Kramer* (1921; cat. no. 15) or *Haile Selassie* (1936; cat. no. 24). With Epstein "the basis of the like-

ness lies in the shape of the skull and in the bony structure of the face."⁷ With small pellets of clay he painstakingly built up the multitude of small planes which eventually determined the shape of each head; these planes are left rough, so that the charged, flickering surface texture becomes a "definite and inseparable part of the whole."⁸ The expressive power of Epstein's faceted surfaces is triumphantly realized in the portrait of Selassie, where the fierce vitality of the individual is played off against the Emperor's haughty, elongated pose.

Epstein continued to exploit this dramatic surface treatment throughout his career; during the fifties however he made several busts with a smoother finish, often indicating details with incised lines.⁹ This more polished style was a felicitous choice for the lean, patrician features of the poet *T.S. Eliot* (1951; cat. no. 35). In this portrait, the delicate modelling, slight forward tilt of the head, and downward glance of the large eyes combine to capture the poet's intense concentration, restraint and intellectual refinement.

In the twenties, Epstein became interested in executing religious groups. *The Seraph* (1924; cat. no. 17), a portrait of the actress and singer Marie Collins, was intended as a model for an angel. However it was not until 1954 that elements of this work were incorporated into the head of the large *Christ in Majesty* for Llandaff Cathedral.¹⁰ Several other pieces in the present exhibition were intended originally as studies for monumental works or figure groups. The model for the *Weeping Woman* (1922; cat. no. 16) appeared at the sculptor's studio, distraught over the disappearance of her son. Epstein immediately envisioned her as the mourning Magdalene and began a figure which he intended as part of a Deposition group that would also include the portrait of Jacob Kramer, executed the year before, as St. John; but this project was never realized.¹¹ Epstein's audacious treatment of the hands and open mouth make the *Weeping Woman* one of the most compelling of his early bronzes. The appalling anguish of the figure re-

calls the Magdalene in Grunewald's *Ilsenheim Altarpiece*, a work which Epstein admired and eventually saw in 1953.¹²

Epstein obviously relished the challenge of portraying celebrated people. His studies of Einstein and Churchill are justly famous, as are the portraits of Augustus John, John Gielgud, Jacob Kramer, Haile Selassie and T.S. Eliot in the current exhibit. Epstein seems particularly to have felt a deep affinity for other artists. His searching portrait of *Ralph Vaughn Williams* (1950; cat. no. 34), executed when the composer was 77 and had just enjoyed a successful public reception of his *Sixth Symphony*,¹³ reverts to a broken surface treatment and is one of the most dynamic of Epstein's male portrait heads. In contrast to the serene introspection of the Eliot bust, the Williams portrait seethes with authority and movement, recalling the oceanic effects of Williams' music and reflecting Epstein's description of the composer as "the master with whom no one would venture to dispute."¹⁴

An earlier portrait of the singer and actor *Paul Robeson* (1928; cat. no. 22) was executed during Epstein's four-month visit to New York in 1927-28. This was the last of a series of three portraits and Epstein regarded it as only a sketch;¹⁵ but the modelling of facial planes shows a virtuoso's skill, and the portrait incorporates one of Epstein's favorite formal devices: a defiant, ragged sawing-off of the neck and the resultant precarious balancing of the head. Epstein obviously wanted the intensity of the facial expression and modelling to "balance" the sheer physical weight of the back of the head—a feat which he accomplished with varying degrees of success in other works.

Although Epstein's portraits of the famous merit their acclaim, a more profound and ultimately more moving facet of his art is revealed in his multiple portraits of favorite female models and family members. It is worth noting that the overwhelming majority of Epstein's portraits of celebrities were of men, and he seemed especially adept at

transposing into his sculptor's medium the unique quality of an individual's achievement (the portraits of Eliot, Williams and the Indian poet Tagore are striking examples). His portraits of women, by contrast, are more psychologically searching, fateful and often intensely erotic—hence his ability to return to the same model again and again, each time with strikingly different expressive results. Even with an intrinsically ordinary face, such as *Betty Cecil's* (1938; cat. no. 25), Epstein was able to infuse the likeness with a provocative mixture of hauteur and erotic energy.

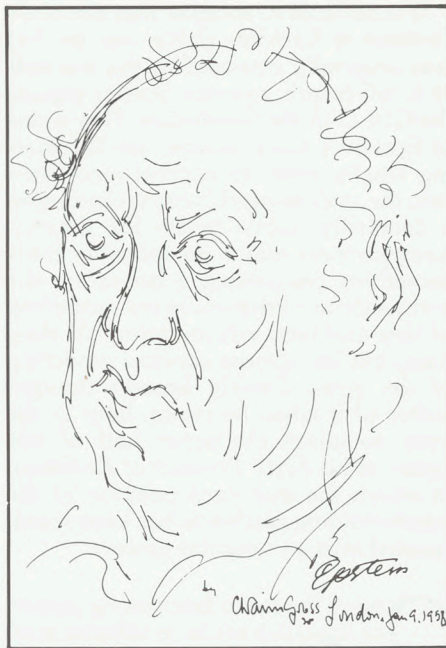
Would-be models flocked to Epstein's studio throughout his career; to be chosen as an "Epstein model" was an extraordinary *coup*. Epstein's choice of models reveals an impatience with accepted norms of prettiness and a delight in those purely idiosyncratic forms of beauty which flow from forceful personality. That he chose to make several, and in some cases many, portraits of a single model probably betrays not so much a fascination with the plastic qualities of a particular face as an abiding passion—even obsession—with the labyrinth of human character. He was drawn especially to non-Europeans, gypsies and London *demimondaines* because their faces seemed to him especially fertile fields for exploration. One of his most striking and famous models was an Indian woman known as Sunita who had come to London after running away from her husband. He made two early portraits of Sunita (*Second and Third Portraits of Sunita*: 1925; cat. no. 20; 1926; cat. no. 21) in which the intensely brooding and tragic expressions contrast sharply with the later, more idealized portraits of her. Sunita also posed for several series of drawings and watercolors and, with her son Enver, modeled for a noble and totally unconventional *Madonna and Child* in 1927, now in the Riverside Church, New York.

Epstein frequently chose black women as models. In 1921 he met Madeleine Bechet, the ravishing daughter

of a French doctor and his Senegalese wife, and asked her to pose. The result, *Senegalese Girl* (1921; cat. no. 14) is one of the most elegant works in the current exhibit. Its equipoise of sensuality and regal dignity recurs often in Epstein's best studies of women, but nowhere as subtly as in this portrait. Another favorite model was *Betty Peters*, who operated a hostel for black sailors in London's East End.¹⁶ In her striking portrait (1934; cat. no. 28) the bent arms are at once defiant and self-protective, an ambivalence brilliantly exploited in the contrast between her wary intelligent face and what must surely be one of the most aggressive coiffures in modern art. In the early 1940s, Epstein, also made a number of small bronze figure studies of both Betty Peters and another black model, *Marie Tracy*, whose portrait he had modelled in 1938 (cat. no. 26).

One of Epstein's finest series of female heads was the portraits of Dolores, a wanton and highly complex beauty of uncertain origins who revelled in her role as Epstein's model. The conspiracy between model and sculptor—Dolores composing her face into more and more flamboyant expressions, Epstein entranced by her responsiveness and vitality—led to a series of portraits which plumb the depths of the artist's genius, from the earliest version, wonderfully modelled but rather smug and self-contained, to the glorious *Fourth Portrait* of 1923. Of the *Third Portrait of Dolores* (1923; cat. no. 18) Epstein himself wrote rather immodestly that it was "tragic and magnificent"; and, indeed, the arms which encircle the body so firmly and the eyes which seem to look inward suggest a terrible grief contained only by implacable pride.

Throughout his life Epstein was fascinated by the ephemeral moods of children and made many sensitive studies of them. He felt that their molten emotional state was an ideal—and almost completely neglected—subject for sculpture. Epstein did at least ten portraits of his eldest daughter Peggy Jean during the first three years of her life, two of which are included in the



Drawing of Jacob Epstein by Chiam Gross, London, 1958.

present exhibit. The small, tender *Sixth Portrait of Peggy Jean* (1920; cat. no. 7) was combined with a *Fifth Portrait* made the same year to form the *Putti* (1920), a grouping which recalls the cherubs of Donatello or the Della Robbia. The pure exuberance of infancy has been somewhat subdued in the *Seventh Portrait* (1920; cat. no. 8) with its charming blend of eagerness and shy hesitation, and its plump, lovingly modelled hands. Epstein frequently returned to the basic composition of his portrait, in which bent elbows form the base of a large triangle, with a wide range of expressive results; he used it again in the somewhat less finished but winningly spontaneous portrait of *Ymiel Oved* (1946; cat. no. 29), a dancing student and the daughter of Epstein's jeweller friend, Mosheh Oved. *Leda Pouting* (1944; cat. no. 27) is the fifth portrait he did of his first grandchild, Peggy Jean's offspring; the little girl's classic expression of childish petulance is beautifully framed by her hair. The piece represents a more uninhibited version of a study of Peggy Jean he made during a childhood illness. For his best studies of children, Epstein used models from his own family; in the commissioned portraits of children like *Robert Rhodes* (1951; cat. no. 32) and *Paul Robeson, Jr.* (1931; cat. no. 23) he obviously felt constrained to achieve a "good likeness" and sacrificed much of the immediacy of his family studies.

The *Second Portrait of Esther* (1948; cat. no. 30), made when his youngest daughter was 19, seems flacid and careless when compared to the celebrated *First Portrait* (1944), a work which stands at the pinnacle of Epstein's achievement and which in fact was the single piece most gratifying to the artist himself:

*If I had to be judged by one work I should choose this. It has all the qualities I most value in sculpture.*¹⁷

In this bust we have one of the most candid revelations of a father's complex feelings for a beautiful adolescent daughter in modern art. The girl's awakening to life, the revelation of her as yet unconscious sexual vitality (and

her father's response to it) are mirrored with rare truthfulness. But the passion that threatens to engulf Esther's face is held in check by the sculptor's brilliant creation of a formal link in the viewer's mind between this study of his daughter and the celebrated bust of Nefertiti, memorable in part for the forward thrust of the regal head and the long, finely chiselled nose which recur so effectively here. As if to underscore a point, Epstein renders Esther's hairdo in a manner which harkens back unmistakably to portraits of bewigged Egyptian princesses.

In 1921 Epstein made the first of seven studies of *Kathleen* Garman, who years later would become his second wife. It is a psychologically idealised portrait (1921; cat. no. 10) in which the artist seems unwilling to expose either his own response to his model or his interpretation of her character. Later portraits reveal the metamorphosis of Epstein's feelings for Kathleen: the *Second Portrait* (1922; cat. no. 11) with its half open eyes, parted lips and luminous black surface betrays a confident and perhaps overpowering sensuality. The *Third Portrait of Kathleen* (1931; cat. no. 12) is the most tense and perhaps the least satisfying of this series; there is an air of constraint in the position of the shoulders and the empty, staring eyes. It seems to portray a woman on the verge of consciousness, but may also reflect Epstein's struggle to keep at bay his growing feelings for her. The portrait obviously disturbed Epstein, who judged it to be too somber; and on his next study of Kathleen in 1933 he traced a wan smile. In the fifth and sixth portraits of Kathleen, the sculptor and husband is able finally to confront squarely the full weight of his wife's experience—her humanity, her suffering, and above all her wisdom. Implicit in both these portraits is the husband's acceptance, however painful, of his wife's understanding of him. Probably few husbands are ever comfortable with their wives' insight into their character; but to embody that insight in plastic form bespeaks moral courage and humility.

It is difficult to imagine that the *Sixth Portrait of Kathleen* (1941; cat. no. 13) was originally intended as the top half of a full-length running bronze figure, the *Girl with the Gardenias*. This is one of Epstein's more bizarre, yet fascinating works, with its various incongruities; the middle-aged face perched upon a decidedly nubile body; the diaphanous garment which inexplicably trails something resembling a bra-strap; the extraordinary litheness in the modelling of legs and feet, which spring off their base, but the almost careless rendering of the arms. Clearly Epstein thought better of it when he chose, later in the year, to adapt the upper half of this figure as his *Sixth Portrait of Kathleen*, in which the awkward position of the hands holding gardenias has been transformed into an oracular gesture.

One of the more fascinating aspects of Epstein's art is its affinity with the traditional sculpture of sub-Saharan Africa. Epstein ardently admired African sculpture from the time he first encountered it during visits to the Trocadero Museum in Paris in 1902.¹⁸ After moving to London, he haunted the African and Polynesian collections in the British Museum and began collecting African carving at the same time as Picasso, Matisse and Vlaminck, whose work would later reveal its influence. Epstein, of all the modern masters to fall under the spell of African art, was the most willing to acknowledge its impact. While denying any direct borrowing, he was quite articulate in identifying those qualities in Negro sculpture which spoke eloquently to him and other artists of the modern movement at the beginning of the century. In it he admired that combination of a forceful abstraction with a persistent naturalism and directness. He also praised what he felt to be the "striking architectural qualities" of African art,¹⁹ and indeed a number of his carved works seem directly to reflect his absorption of the essential plastic characteristics of African sculpture, including several works from the Vortec period: *Cursed Be the Day Whereon*

I was Born, Female Figure in Flenite, and the *First and Second Venuses*. The cynocephalic head in *Rock Drill* bears a striking resemblance to Baule figures of the god of judgment not only in its form but in its communication of inexorable force. The monumental *Genesis* of 1930 bears the clear stamp of African influence; indeed the face is disturbingly reminiscent of the African-inspired faces in Picasso's pivotal *Demoielles d'Avignon*.

Epstein's feeling for African sculpture extended beyond an appreciation of its formal qualities. He insisted, prophetically, that to be understood and fully appreciated it must be studied within its cultural context. Above all he was attracted to African sculpture for its intense mystery and gravity, linking these qualities to its functions in the religious and occult life of African peoples.²⁰ Although it is hazardous to take the notion of influence too far, it might be suggested that ultimately Epstein absorbed far more of the spiritual quality of African art than he did of its formal properties. After all, African sculpture is almost always carved, while modelling is preeminent in Epstein's work. But there are certain features in his best portraits which recur in African carvings: the body-hugging gestures and the inwardness of many of the glances, devices which do not detract from the great immediacy of the images but which prevent the spectator from intruding upon the privacy of the subject's thought; the gravity and tragic dignity of many of his heads; the severe and uncoquettish eroticism of many of his studies of women. Epstein did three "masks" between 1916 and 1918, including the *Mask of Meum* (1918; cat. no. 6), in which these qualities are strikingly evident, and in which the actual hollowed-out convention of the mask was observed. Finally, one must not overlook Epstein's lifelong preoccupation with fecundity and motherhood, which provided the themes for many of his public works. His conception of maternity as a noble burden and his portrayal of woman as possessor of the key to the greatest mystery of the uni-

verse is very close to the African feelings on these subjects and contrasts sharply with the sentimentalized and ultimately degrading image of woman in the West.

In an age ravenous for novelty and intolerant of direct expressions of feeling in plastic art, Epstein's work may embarrass by its emotional explicitness and unabashed warmth—a warmth which, in later works like the portraits of Princess Margaret and Gina Lollobrigida, frequently spills over into mawkishness. Yet it is precisely the emotional drama in Epstein's most successful work—that intensity which links him to such diverse masters as Donatello and the anonymous sculptors of Moissac—to which one returns again and again, with growing involvement and respect.

S. B.

K. C.

All sculptures are bronze.
Dimension indicates height.

Footnotes

1. Jacob Epstein, *Epstein: An Autobiography*, (London: Hulton Press, 1955), p. 57.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
3. Richard Buckle, *Jacob Epstein Sculptor*, (Cleveland and New York: World Publishing Company, 1963), pp. 10-11, 13, 15-16, 18-20.
4. Arnold L. Haskell, *The Sculptor Speaks*, (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1931), p. 78.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 67.
6. Epstein, *op. cit.*, p. 89.
7. Haskell, *op. cit.*, p. 68.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 79.
9. Buckle, *op. cit.*, p. 332.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 132.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 110.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 410.
13. Michael Kennedy, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 303.
14. Epstein, *op. cit.*, p. 234.
15. Robert Black, *The Art of Jacob Epstein*, (Cleveland and New York: World Publishing Company, 1942), p. 16.
16. Buckle, *op. cit.*, p. 249.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 293.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
19. Arnold L. Haskell, *The Sculptor Speaks*, (New York: Benjamin Blom, Inc., 1932), p. 87.
20. *Ibid.*

1. Euphemia Lamb, 1908; 15"



2. English Girl, 1909; 13-1/2"



3. Nan the Dreamer, 1911; 11-3/4"





6. Mask of Meum, 1918; 7"



5. Head of Meum, 1917; 13"



4. Augustus John, 1916; 15"

7. Sixth Portrait of Peggy Jean, 1920; 8-1/2"



8. Seventh Portrait of Peggy Jean, 1920; 14-1/4"



9. Miriam Plichte, 1921; 26"





10. First Portrait of Kathleen, 1921; 16"



11. Second Portrait of Kathleen, 1922; 17-3/4"



12. Third Portrait of Kathleen, 1931; 21"



13. Sixth Portrait of Kathleen, 1941; 27-1/2"

14. Senegalese Girl, 1921; 22"





15. Jacob Kramer, 1921; 25-1/2"



16. The Weeping Woman, 1921; 24"



17. The Seraph, 1924; 10-3/4"



18. Third Portrait of Dolores, 1923; 23"



19. First Portrait of Oriel Ross, 1925; 21"



20. Second Portrait of Sunita, 1925; 23"

21. Third Portrait of Sunita, 1926; 23-1/4"





22. Paul Robeson, 1928; 14-1/2"



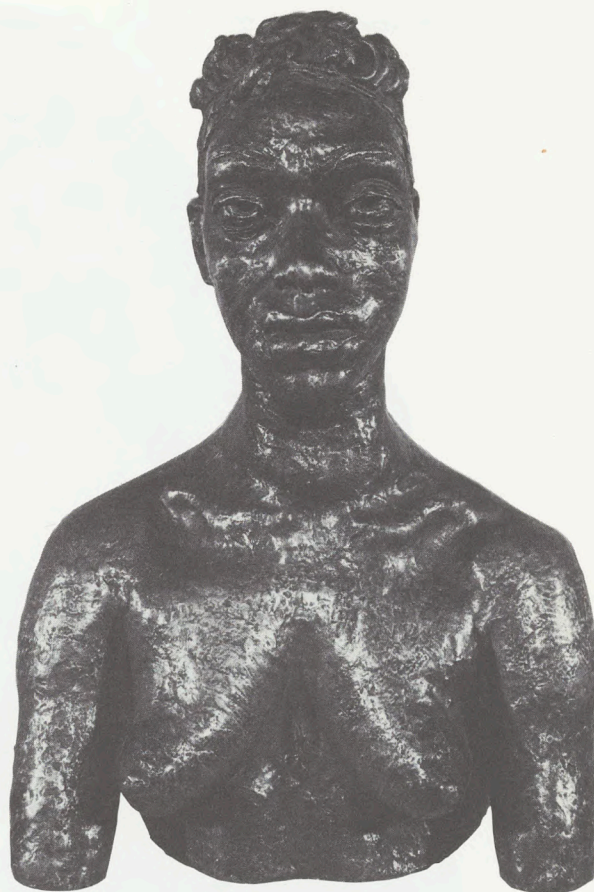
23. Paul Robeson, Jr. 1931; 10-1/4"



24. Haile Selassie, 1936; 45-1/2"



25. Betty Cecil, 1938; 22-1/2"

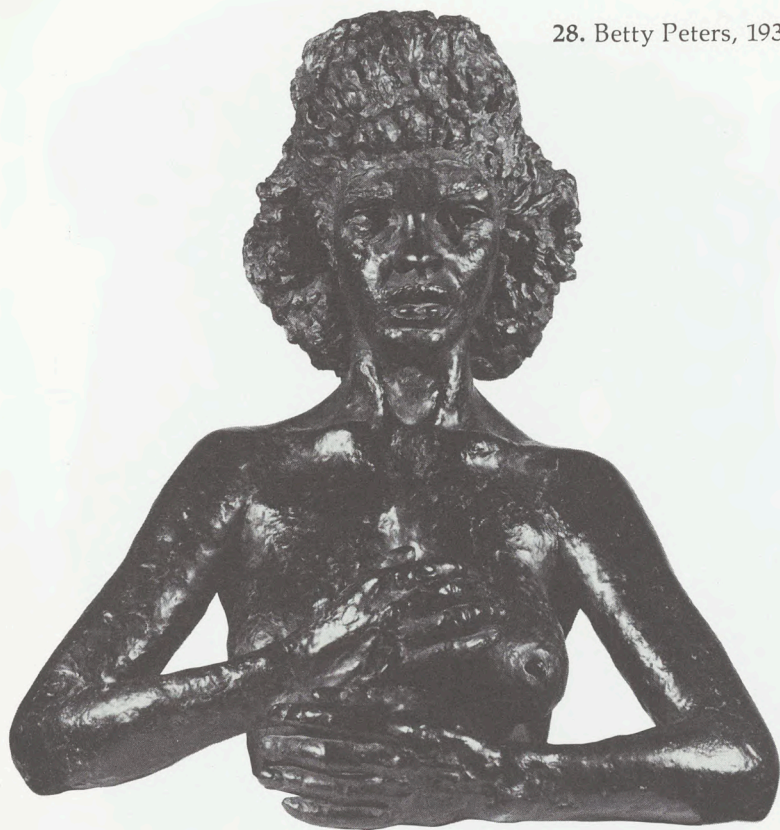


26. Marie Tracy, 1938; 21-1/2"

27. Fifth Portrait of Leda (Pouting), 1944; 9"



28. Betty Peters, 1939; 27"



29. Ymiel Oved, 1946; 17-1/2"



31. Anthony, 1947; 12-1/2"





32. Robert Rhodes, 1951; 12-1/2"



30. Second Portrait of Esther, 1948; 18"



33. Sir John Gielgud, 1933; 15-3/4"



34. Ralph Vaughan Williams, c. 1949-50; 15-1/2"



35. T. S. Eliot, 1951; 18"

BIOGRAPHY

1880.

Born to Russian-Polish parents in New York's East Side.

1888-1890.

Entered foundry for bronze casting and attended a modeling class under the direction of George Grey Barnard at the Art Students' League.

Illustrated *The Spirit of the Ghetto* by Hutchins Hapgood.

1902.

Went to Paris where he studied first at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and then at the Academie Julian.

1905.

Moved to London.

1907.

Received commission for eighteen carved figures to decorate the British Medical Association building in Agar Street, Strand, London.

1911.

Commissioned to execute the Oscar Wilde tomb for Pere Lachaise cemetery in Paris.

1912-1913.

Met Modigliani, Brancusi and Picasso while in Paris for erection of the Wilde tomb.

Upon return to England settled briefly at Pitt Level on the Sussex Coast where he carved some of his most abstract works including *Venus* and *Cursed Be the Day Whereon I was Born*.

1913.

First one-man show at the Twenty-One Gallery, Adelphi, London.

Rock Drill exhibited at the London Group.

1917.

Began *Risen Christ* (completed 1919).

1924.

Began carving *Rima*, the Hyde Park memorial to W. H. Hudson (unveiled 1925).

1927.

Madonna and Child.

Visited United States for his one-man show at the Feragil Gallery, New York City.

1928-1929.

Carved *Day and Night* for the Underground Headquarters Building, London.

1929.

Began *Genesis* (completed 1931).

1933.

Made a series of about 100 watercolors of Epping Forest.

1934-1935.

Carved *Ecce Homo*.

1936-1937.

Consummation Est.

1938.

Exhibited (at Arthur Tooth and Sons) sixty drawings made as illustrations for Baudelaire's *Fleurs du Mal*.

Began the alabaster *Adam* (completed 1939).

1940.

Began *Jacob and the Angel* (completed 1941).

1941.

Girl with Gardenias.

1943.

Commissioned by Ministry of Information to do portraits of several important war leaders including Sir Alan Cunningham, Air Marshal Portal and Winston Churchill.

1943-1945.

Lucifer.

1947.

Began carving *Lazarus* (completed 1948).

Bought and placed in New College Chapel, Oxford, in

1952.

1950.

Commissioned by the Arts Council to sculpt a figure for the Festival of Britain 1951. Fulfilled this commission with an over life-size bronze entitled *Youth Advancing*.

Madonna and Child commissioned by Nuns of the Convent of the Holy Child Jesus for a site on Cavendish Square, London.

1951.

Traveled to Philadelphia to observe site proposed for his five-figure group titled *Social Consciousness*, commissioned by the Fairmount Park Trust of Philadelphia.

1952.

Retrospective exhibition at the Tate Gallery.

1953.

Received D.C.L. degree from Oxford University.

Commissioned to execute *Christ in Majesty* for Llandaff Cathedral.

Completed *Social Consciousness*.

1954.

Knighted by Queen Elizabeth.

Worked on Llandaff *Christ* and the large male figure commissioned for the facade of Lewis's, a Liverpool department store (unveiled 1956).

1955.

Commissioned by the Office of Works to make a statue of *Field Marshal Smuts* for Parliament Square (unveiled 1956).

Traveled to Philadelphia for unveiling of *Social Consciousness*.

Received commission for *St. Michael and the Devil* for Coventry Cathedral (unveiled 1960).

1956.

Began work on a commission from the director of Bowaters for a figure group to be erected before their new building at an entrance to Hyde Park.

1957.

Carved Trades Union Council War Memorial (unveiled 1958).

Modelled portrait of William Blake, commissioned by the Blake Society for the Poet's Corner in Westminster Abbey.

1958.

Traveled to Italy and France.

Began work on a statue of David Lloyd George commissioned by the Office of Works for the House of Commons; only the head was completed.

Hospitalized for pleurisy and thrombosis.

1959.

Modelled several portraits including Dr. Fisher, Archbishop of Canterbury and Sir Russel Brain, President of the Royal College of Physicians.

Died August 19 after giving casting instructions for the Bowater House group.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Principal Exhibition Catalogues in Chronological Order

- The Leicester Galleries, London. *Catalogue of an Exhibition of the Sculpture of Jacob Epstein*. February-March 1917.
- . *Catalogue of an Exhibition of Water-Colours and Drawings by a Group of Artists Serving with His Majesty's Forces Including Recent Sculpture by Jacob Epstein*. October 1917.
- . *Catalogue of an Exhibition of Recent Sculpture by Jacob Epstein*. February-March 1920.
- . *Catalogue of an Exhibition of New Sculpture by Jacob Epstein*. January-February 1924.
- . *Catalogue of an Exhibition of New Work in Sculpture by Jacob Epstein*. June-July 1926.
- . *Catalogue of an Exhibition of New Sculpture by Jacob Epstein*. February-March 1931.
- The Redfern Gallery Ltd., London. *Epstein Illustrations to the Old Testament*. London: The Redfern Gallery Ltd., [1932].
- The Leicester Galleries, London. *Catalogue of an Exhibition of Carvings and Bronzes by Jacob Epstein*. June 1933.
- . *Catalogue of an Exhibition of Carving and Bronzes by Jacob Epstein*. March-April 1935.
- . *Catalogue of an Exhibition of Sculpture by Jacob Epstein*. October-November 1937.
- . *Catalogue of an Exhibition of New Sculpture and Drawings of Children by Jacob Epstein*. June-July 1939.
- . *Catalogue of an Exhibition of Flower Paintings and Some New Bronzes by Jacob Epstein*. October 1940.
- . *Catalogue of the Exhibitions: Jacob and the Angel and New Bronzes by Jacob Epstein—Recent Paintings by Dodd Procter, A.R.A.* February 1942.
- . *Catalogue of an Exhibition of "Girl with the Gardenias" and Other Recent Sculpture by Jacob Epstein*. May-June 1944.
- . *Jacob Epstein—"Lucifer" and Paintings of Flowers and Landscapes of Epping Forest*. November-December 1945.
- . *Catalogue of the Exhibitions: Landscapes in Oil and Water Colour by Ethelbert White—New Sculpture by Jacob Epstein*. February-March 1947.
- . *Catalogue of the Exhibitions: Landscapes in Oil and Water-Colour by Ethelbert White—A New Carving, "Lazarus" and Other Recent Sculpture by Jacob Epstein*. March 1950.
- Arts Council of Great Britain. *Epstein an Exhibition Held at the Tate Gallery*. Introduction by Philip James. September 25-November 9, 1952. Westerham, Kent: Westerham Press Ltd., 1952. With a supplement, *Epstein Book of Illustrations*. London and Wisbach: Balding & Mansell, Printers, for the Arts Council of Great Britain, 1952.
- The Leicester Galleries, London. *Catalogue of an Exhibition of Recent Portraits by Jacob Epstein*. June 1953.
- Dunkelman Gallery, Toronto. *Jacob Epstein Retrospective Exhibition of Sculpture and Drawings*. (1960.)
- The Leicester Galleries, London. *Fifty Years of Bronzes and Drawings by Sir Jacob Epstein (1880-1959)*. Preface by Arnold L. Haskell. June 10-July 7, 1960.
- Auckland City Art Gallery. *Jacob Epstein Drawings and Sculpture*. Foreword by P.A. Tomory. Introduction by Kathleen Epstein. March-April 1961. Auckland, New Zealand: The Pelorus Press Limited, 1961.
- Arts Council of Great Britain. *Epstein, Exhibition at the Tate Gallery*. Introduction by John Rothenstein. November-December 1961. London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1961.
- The Hecht Company, Washington, D.C. *Epstein—A Retrospective Exhibit and Sale of the Sculpture of the Late Sir Jacob Epstein*. April 1-14, 1965. Washington, D.C.: The Hecht Company, 1965.
- Fairleigh Dickinson University, Rutherford, New Jersey. *Exhibition of Sir Jacob Epstein's Work from the Collection of Edward P. Schinman*. Introduction by Kathleen Epstein. February 19-April 1, 1967. Rutherford, New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1967.
- Garelick's Gallery, Detroit. *Sir Jacob Epstein, Bronzes*. September 24-October 21, 1967.
- The Leicester Galleries, London. *Catalogue of an Exhibition of Sculpture and Drawings from 1900 to 1932 by Sir Jacob Epstein (1880-1959)*. June 17-July 17, 1971.

Books

- Black, Robert. *The Art of Jacob Epstein*. Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Company, 1942.
- Buckle, Richard. *Jacob Epstein—Sculptor*. Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Company, 1963.
- Dieren, Bernard Van. *Epstein*. London: John Lane, 1920.
- Epstein, Jacob. *Epstein, An Autobiography*. London: Hulton Press, 1955.
- . *Epstein, An Autobiography*. (second edition). London: Vista Books, 1963.
- . *Let There Be Sculpture*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1940.
- Epstein, Kathleen. *Epstein Drawings*. Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Company, 1962.
- Hapgood, Hutchins. *The Spirit of the Ghetto*. New York and London: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1902.
- Haskell, Arnold L. *The Sculptor Speaks*. London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1931.
- Ireland, Geoffrey. *Epstein—A Camera Study of the Sculptor at Work*. Introduction by Laurie Lee. London: Andre Deutsch Ltd., n.d.
- Oyved, Moysheh [Edward Good]. *The Book of Affinity*. (Frontispiece in color and six black and white reproductions of watercolors by Epstein.) New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1935.
- Powell, L. B. *Jacob Epstein*. London: Chapman and Hall Ltd., 1932.
- Wellington, Hubert. *Epstein, Seventy-Five Drawings*. London: J. Seville and Co., Ltd., 1929.
- . *Jacob Epstein*. Contemporary British Artists, ed. by Albert Rutherston. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925.

Principal Articles and Reviews

- Binyon, Laurence. "The Art of Jacob Epstein," *The New Statesman*, VIII (March 17, 1917), 567-568.
- Dieren, Bernard Van. "Epstein," *The New Age*, XX (March 8, 1917), 451-453.
- "Epstein at Smith College," *American Magazine of Art*, XXVI (June 1933), 306-309.
- Fried, Michael. "Epstein Amid the Moderns," *Arts*, XXXVI (January 1962), 50-52.
- Grafly, Dorothy. "Gill and Epstein," *American Magazine of Art*, XXVII (June 1934), 325-333.
- Kramer, Hilton. "Month in Review," *Arts*, XXXII (April 1958), 50-53.
- Manson, J. B. "Jacob Epstein's Sculpture," *The New Age*, XX (March 1, 1917), 425-426.
- Moore, Henry. "Jacob Epstein: An Appreciation." *The Sunday Times*, (London). August 23, 1959.
- Payne, Elizabeth H. "A Portrait Head of Paul Robeson," *Bulletin of the Smith College Museum of Art*, no. 14 (May 1933), 11-13.

- "Sell Eight Epstein's," *Art Digest*, II (December 1, 1927), 1, 4.
- Stechow, Wolfgang. "Three Works by Jacob Epstein," *Oberlin College Allen Memorial Art Museum Bulletin*, XXV. No. 1 (Fall, 1967), 19-25.
- Vincent, Clare. "In Search of A Likeness: Some European Portrait Sculpture," *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, XXIV (April 1966), 245-260.
- Whittet, G. S. "London Commentary," *Studio*, CLX (September 1960), 108-110, 116-117.

Catalogues of Public and Private Collections

- Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art*, LIII (Sept. 1966). (gallery checklist).
- Chamot, Mary, Dennis Farr and Martin Butlin. *The Modern British Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture*. Vol. I (Tate Gallery catalogues). London: The Oldbourne Press by orders of the Trustees of the Tate Gallery, 1964.
- John Quinn 1870-1925 Collection of Paintings, Watercolors, Drawings, and Sculpture. Huntington, N.Y.: Pigeon Hill Press, 1926.
- National Portrait Gallery Annual Report of the Trustees 1962-1963. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1963.
- National Portrait Gallery Annual Report of the Trustees 1965-1966. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1967.
- Ritchie, Andrew C., ed. *Catalogue of Contemporary Paintings and Sculpture, The Buffalo Fine Arts Academy, Albright Art Gallery*. Buffalo: the Buffalo Fine Arts Academy, 1949.
- Rothenstein, John. *The Tate Gallery*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1963.
- Schinman, Edward P. and Barbara Ann Schinman, eds. *Jacob Epstein, A Catalogue of the Collection of Edward P. Schinman*. Rutherford, Madison, Tenneck; Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1970.
- Smith College Museum of Art Catalogue. Northampton, Mass.: Smith College Museum of Art, 1937.



